President of Russia Vladimir Putin: Citizens of Russia, friends,

The year 2022 is drawing to a close. It was a year of difficult but necessary decisions, of important steps towards Russia's full sovereignty and a powerful consolidation of our society.

It was a year that put many things in their place, and drew a clear line between courage and heroism, on the one hand, and betrayal and cowardice on the other, showed us that there is nothing stronger than love for our near and dear, loyalty to our friends and comrades-in-arms, and devotion to our Fatherland.

It was a year of truly pivotal, even fateful events. They became the frontier where we lay the foundation for our common future, our true independence.

This is what we are fighting for today, protecting our people in our historical territories in the new regions of the Russian Federation. Together, we are building and creating.

Russia’s future is what matters the most. Defending our Motherland is the sacred duty we owe to our ancestors and descendants. The moral and historical truth is on our side.

The outgoing year has brought great and dramatic changes to our country and to the world. It was filled with uncertainty, anxiety and worry.

But our multiethnic nation showed great courage and dignity as it had in every challenging period in Russian history, supported the defenders of our Fatherland, our soldiers and officers, and all participants in the special military operation, in both word and deed.

We have always known that Russia's sovereign, independent and secure future depends only on us, on our strength and determination, and today, we have become convinced of it once again.

For years, Western elites hypocritically assured us of their peaceful intentions, including to help resolve the serious conflict in Donbass. But in fact, they encouraged the neo-Nazis in every possible way, who continued to take military and overtly terrorist action against peaceful civilians in the people's republics of Donbass.

The West lied to us about peace while preparing for aggression, and today, they no longer hesitate to openly admit it and to cynically use Ukraine and its people as a means to weaken and divide Russia. We have never allowed anyone to do this and we will not allow it now.

Russian servicemen, militiamen and volunteers are now fighting for their homeland, for truth and justice, for reliable guarantees of peace and Russia’s security. They are all our heroes and they are shouldering the heaviest burden right now.

From the bottom of my heart, I wish a very happy New Year to every participant in the special military operation, to those who are here next to me now, and who are on the frontline, those getting ready for action at training centres, those who are in hospitals or already back home, having fulfilled their duty, to all those now on combat duty in strategic units, and all personnel of the Russian Armed Forces.

Comrades,

thank you for your valiant service. Our entire vast country is proud of your fortitude, endurance and courage. Millions of people are with you in their hearts and souls, and will be raising a toast to you at their New Year's table.

Many thanks to everyone who provides ancillary support for military operations: drivers and railway workers who deliver supplies to the front, doctors, paramedics, and nurses who are fighting for soldiers’ lives and nursing wounded civilians. I thank the workers and engineers at our military and other plants who are working today with great dedication, builders who are erecting civilian facilities and defensive fortifications,

and helping to restore the destroyed cities and villages in Donbass and Novorossiya.

Friends,

Russia has been living under sanctions since the events in Crimea in 2014, but this year, a full-blown sanctions war has been unleashed against us. Those who started it expected our industry, finances and transport to collapse and never recover.

This did not happen, because together we created a reliable margin of safety. We have been taking steps and measures towards strengthening our sovereignty in a vitally important field, in the economy. Our struggle for our country, for our interests and for our future undoubtedly serves as an inspiring example for other states in their quest for a just multipolar world order.

I consider it very important that in the outgoing year, such qualities as mercy, solidarity and proactive empathy have become especially important in Russia. More and more Russians feel the need to help others. They rally together and take initiative without any formal instructions.

I want to thank you for being so considerate, responsible and kind, for your active involvement in the common cause regardless of age or income. You arrange warehouses and transport to deliver parcels to our fighters in the combat zone, to the residents of affected cities and towns, and help organise holidays for children from the new constituent entities of the Federation.

My friends, you are providing great support to the families of the fighters who perished, who gave their lives defending the lives of others.

I know how difficult it is for their wives, sons and daughters, and for their parents, who raised real heroes; I understand how they feel now, on New Year's Eve. We will make every effort to help the families of our

fallen comrades raise their children, give them a good education, and get a profession.

With all my heart, I share your pain and ask you to accept my sincere words of support.

Friends,

Our country has always celebrated the start of the New Year, even during very difficult times. It has always been everyone's favourite holiday, and has a magical power to reveal the best in people, to heighten the importance of traditional family values, the energy of kindness, generosity and trust.

As we see the New Year in, everyone strives to give joy to their loved ones, to show them attention and warmth, to give them presents they have been dreaming of, to see the delight in children's eyes and parents' touching gratitude for our attention. The older generation knows how to appreciate such moments of happiness.

Friends, now is the best moment to leave all personal grievances and misunderstandings in the past, to tell our nearest and dearest how we feel, how much we love them, how important it is to take care of each other – always, at any time.

Let these heartfelt words and noble feelings give each of us immense strength and confidence that together, we will overcome all the challenges and keep our country great and independent.

We will only move forward, to fight for our families and for Russia, for the future of our only, beloved Motherland.

Happy New Year, friends! Happy 2023!